

The Elder Monthly

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DEVOTED TO THINGS
NUMISMATIC
ARCHAEOLOGIC
PHILATELIC
HISTORIC
ANTIQUE, &c.



PUBLISHED BY THOMAS L. ELDER
32 East Twenty-third Street, New York



PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT

WHO FAVORS CHANGES IN THE DESIGNS OF OUR PRESENT COINAGE.

The Elder Monthly

THOMAS L. ELDER, *Editor*

VOL. II

NEW YORK AUG.-SEPT. 1907

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Editorials

The "Order of Independent Americans" and other trouble hunters, protest against the placing of Mary Cunningham's profile on our coins because the lady was born in Ireland. Saffron and sensational journals will doubtless make capital out of this but the protest is perfectly absurd. Even the bluest-blooded Americans have only to go back a few generations to trace their ancestors to English, Irish, French or German soil. Anyhow, we shall have to take Miss Cunningham if we are to have the designs of Mr. St. Gaudens. Speaking of American types for coins, the editor wonders if the exquisite head on the present Liberian silver coins might not be that of an American girl. It seems to be that of a type frequently seen here.

Those who read Mr. Elder's story entitled "Wonderful Mysterious Jewels," which appeared in our March number, will be interested in the Sun's account in this issue, and in the third chapter regarding "Fritz." He used to be a weekly visitor at the office of this magazine. Note that a large number of cut stones were found upon his dead body. The ruling passion was strong in death.

It is thought that Fritz had been dead for seven days when his body was found. His nephew and namesake, an officer in the United States army, called upon the editor and stated that there was still a large doubt whether Fritz had been murdered or had committed suicide. He stated also that the wonderful necklace, brooches diamonds, sapphires, etc., mentioned in the article and \$17,000 in cash in the Mechanics Bank, and \$18,000 in stock certificates had disappeared. No trace of these can now be found. Here is a case worthy of Sherlock Holmes.

James H. Manning, Esq., President of the Weed-Parsons Printing Company, of Albany, has recently presented the editor with a quaint old document, a "Certification blank," signed by B. Lincoln, collector of the Port of Boston, and by T. Melville, who was the last survivor of the Boston Tea Party. This old bit of paper is over one hundred years old and refers to a hogshead containing 57 gallons of Bordeaux claret.

Mr. Manning has a wonderful collection of manuscripts, books and coins. As to the coins, Mr. Elder can certify that one of them cost Mr. Manning at least \$1,000.

The Sun—not the Columbus Sun, we hasten to add—continues to print good Numismatic stories. While the Ohio State Journal described the recent numismatic exhibit at Columbus as valued at \$200,000, the Sun of the same city came out on the same day with the glad news "that the exhibit was valued at \$10,000", adding that the exhibits were not valuable as coins, but were only imitations to show what the real thing was like.

A fast little horse named "Goldproof" has been winning plenty of money during the past summer at New York race tracks. We wonder whether its owner collects \$2½s, 5s, or 10s. How about it, brother Mitchelson?

Mr. Granberg, one of us, is to be congratulated on his recent successful gold and silver mining operations. At Columbus he showed us several thousand dollars' worth of yellow gold from his own mines, and said he "made \$165,000 by staying out of the Stickney coin sale." He belongs in the front rank of collectors and his holdings in coins and paper money are fairly staggering.

A set of medals of the musical composers probably will be next issued by Mr. Elder. Those to be included are Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Wagner. Portraits of these composers will adorn the obverses, while the reverses will give dates of birth and death, and the names of some of their most important works.

The American Art News of this city has sent us copies of its valuable publication showing that it is interested in Numismatics and has been printing notes of collectors and the auction sales.

Include among the honorable patrons of Numismatics, the Times, the Tribune and Post, of New York, and the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

At Columbus, H. O. Granberg received the largest vote cast for any of the board of governors.

Mr. Blake's Work in "Green-backs"

By special arrangement with George H. Blake, we shall, in our October issue, commence the publication of his splendid pamphlet on United States green-backs, the only work of its kind ever compiled. This article, from the pen of the greatest authority on green-backs in the United States, is of immense value to collectors, bankers and financiers, and not only will it make many new collectors of green-backs, but will, as did Mr. Henry R. Drowne's work on the United States fractional currency, help to enhance their value.

The XIII and XIV Sales

Mr. Elder's sale XIII, to be held on the evenings of October 14th and 15th, next, beginning at 7 o'clock, at the Elder Auction Rooms, 32 East Twenty-third Street, New York, gives promise of being the numismatic sensation of recent years, so far as New York is concerned. One may scratch his head and ponder over the fact that it was away back somewhere in the Parmelee days when a coin sale of 2,000 lots was held in Gotham. The usual custom of keeping each class of coins by itself will in this instance—and intentionally—be departed from, with the result that the pencils of both amateur and elect will be kept busy cutting the atmosphere.

Sale XIV will be somewhat of a departure from the regular order, owing to the large offering of valuable ancient Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek and Roman beads, pottery, glass, jewelry, weapons, etc., but a valuable and interesting lot of coins, medals and paper money will be included to interest the coin collectors.

Will Metropolitan Museum get the Kann Collection?

"A special cablegram from Berlin, dated September 17th, to the New York World, states that it had been the late Adolphe Kann's fear that his great collection, might be sold to English or American buyers. Talking to William Bode, director of the Berlin Museums, Herr Kann, three days before his death, sent for a notary to prevent its sale. Kann, however, died before the notary saw him again, and strangely the notary also died without disclosing Kann's intentions. Director Bode regrets that the greater part of the best works of the Kann collection are lost to Europe." The above dispatch would tend to confirm the reports that the collection would become a part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The price paid by Duveen Bros. for the Kann collection was \$5,000,000.

Recently a woman passenger on a N. Y., N. H. & H. R. R. train left on the seat of a coach a black tin box containing \$236,000 and afterwards offered a reward for it of \$10,000. The box would never have got out of her hands had she been a numismatist.

Business Methods of Baldwin

Those who contemplate sending bids for auction sales in London, England, or who wish to purchase coins there should take careful note of the Editor's experience with A. H. Baldwin, a dealer, of that city. Mr. Baldwin received from Mr. Elder previous to the recent Cartwright sale, enormous bids on three lots. These bids, which were sent both by letter and by cable, Mr. Baldwin duly acknowledged under date of June 11th, ten days prior to the sale. On the Ormsby and Kohler pieces especially high bids were made, as described in the Sun, and on the lot containing the Mormon \$2½ gold, Mr. Elder sent an almost unlimited bid, suggesting that the lot should be bought for \$100 but not binding Mr. Baldwin to this sum.

After the sale, no response or explanation from Baldwin. Finally on August 20th, two months after the sale, Mr. Baldwin saw fit to write as follows:

"Regarding the Lot 224 (containing the Mormon \$2½), from the Bruce Cartwright sale. I had a commission on this from a client for *Twenty pounds*, a man for whom I purchased a good many lots at this sale. I purchased this (the Mormon lot) for *Ten Pounds and Ten Shillings* (about \$50). Now I clean overlooked this commission of yours (\$100)."

The American collector to whom Mr. Baldwin sent this lot after the sale, received the lot for ~~about~~ *about 10 Pounds*. Why did Baldwin (if he was telling Mr. Elder the truth) send the lot to a collector for the price at which it sold, about 10 pounds, when he had a "bid from a client for 20 pounds," and in addition, Mr. Elder's unlimited bid, the latter received before any other bids, as in his letter acknowledging Mr. Elder's bids he makes no mention of any other bids on this piece.

In view of the above facts, the following excerpts from subsequent letters of Baldwin are interesting:

"I have never in the course of my 35 years' business as a numismatist, stooped to trickery."

"You may take whatever action you like, but I would remind you that if you accuse me of either trickery or lying, I have a remedy on this side."

Let all fair minded English and American collectors decide as to the personal character, business methods and reliability of said Baldwin.

Resolutions of the Coinage Committee of the American Numismatic Society

Future Improvement of the United States Coinage.

In view of the great advances that France, England and other foreign countries are making in the matter of artistic coinage, we beg to offer the following suggestions for your most careful consideration:

FIRST. That Congress be petitioned to authorize an entirely new coinage, which shall be artistic in design.

The entire coinage of the United States consists of 10 denominations.

In order that the designs for the new coins shall be truly artistic in character, the best artistic talent of the country must be enlisted; and to this end it is necessary that these artists should receive a just recompense for their designs. We recommend, therefore:

I. That the sum of, say, Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) be appropriated for each special coin model, without regard to the monetary value of the coin to be issued, whether a cent or a twenty-dollar gold piece, as it is as important to have the coins of the lowest denominations as artistic as the highest.

II. That the six best designs received for each piece shall be awarded \$1,000 each from the above sum of \$10,000, and that the Committee hereinafter proposed shall have the right to select the best of the six designs, and to accept the model with or without modification by the designer, paying the successful competitor an additional sum of \$4,000. The cost of the dies for each coin would, then, not exceed \$10,000.

III. Artists may submit designs for each denomination in each metal, but an artist receiving a first award in one of the metals will not be permitted to compete for the other denominations in the same metal.

IV. That the Committee to pass upon the models for the coins shall consist of the President of the United States, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of the Mint, one member each from the Senate and the House of Representatives, three numismatists, one sculptor and one painter.

The following further suggestions may also be presented, as of practical importance:

V. The coins need not necessarily be in very high relief. Some magnificent works of art have been executed in very low relief, as shown in the medallic art of the later centuries.

The coins should be of such sizes as to be commercially convenient, and should not be so irregular in surface as to afford opportunity for the accumulation of germs and the consequent risk of spreading disease.

VI. By no more direct means is it possible to awaken an artistic taste than by an artistic coin. The art educating value of such a coinage will be at once apparent. The poorest child in the most obscure hamlet or poorest tenement would thus have the opportunity of knowing and seeing the works of the best living masters.

VII. With regard to the expense involved, the National Gallery at London, the Louvre in Paris, and our own Metropolitan Museum of Art would not hesitate to spend \$100,000 for a single very important painting, on account of the educational and artistic value of such object. The price of a single painting of this kind would replace our entire metallic currency with a coinage that would probably be unequaled in both beauty and utility by any nation on the globe, and would do much to remove from the United States the insinuation that we are not an artistic people.

VIII. Without entailing any additional expense in minting our coins, if they were made of a metallic weight, diameter and thickness, a coinage so stamped would aid this country in attaining a greater commercial name and in educating the children in metric values, a knowledge which is absolutely necessary in the transaction of business in any other than an English speaking country.

The Improvement of the Coin Collection at the Philadelphia Mint

Second Resolution of the Numismatic Society.

A visit to the United States Mint has always been a matter of great interest to the hundred thousand of our people who visit Philadelphia annually. One feature of the Mint, however, has not been developed, save in a very small way, compared with that of the great mint of the French government. This feature is the numismatic collection, which is indeed fine, but far from what it might and should be. This has been due to the fact that only the trivial sum of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300) is annually allowed for the entire purchase of coins and medals. If this collection were better known, and a fund provided for its enlargement, the result would be greatly to the credit of our country and our government. To this end, a few suggestions are presented, along the following lines.

1: If the Mint itself would issue annually a medal, upon one side of which there would appear the mint building, and upon the other side the most important historic event of the year, such as the inauguration of a president, the opening of a canal like the Panama, the Hudson-Fulton celebration, or other important national event, and if these medals were designed by competent artists throughout the country who would give their best endeavors to making a series of memorials of historic interest, these could be sold for a small sum, perhaps twenty-five or fifty cents, and would be taken as valuable mementoes by visitors, and also would be eagerly sought by the numismatic societies, by coin and medal collectors, and by art lovers throughout the entire world. Much would thus be done to increase the dignity of our mint, and to furnish and distribute an accurate record of historic events in this most indestructible form.

2: That a small guide or catalogue to the collection be annually issued, in addition to which there could be discussed or described each year some one division of the coins in the mint cabinet, such as its colonial coinage, the coinage of the Civil War, the coinage of ancient Rome, etc. This pamphlet need not sell for more than ten to twenty-five cents, and like the medals would be taken by many visitors.

3: That the medal and the pamphlet being issued by the government, all private enterprise be eliminated from the United States Mint in the sale of its catalogues, medals or other objects, and that all gain derived from such sales by the mint authorities be set aside for the purchase of additions to the coinage and medallic library and collections of the Mint.

Movement For a New Coinage

President Roosevelt replies to the Numismatic Society.

In reply to the Coinage Committee of the American Numismatic Society which sent its resolutions to the President, Mr. Roosevelt wrote under date of August first:

"I am in receipt of your letter of July 29th, with accompanying resolutions, and have called for a report on them from the Secretary of the Treasury.

You will be pleased to know that we are now completing a new coinage of the eagle and double eagle designed by Saint Gaudens, than whom certainly there is no greater artistic genius living in the United States or elsewhere."

The members of the Coinage Committee are: George F. Kunz, Chairman; Thomas L. Elder, Secretary; Daniel Parrish, Jr., Victor D. Brenner and S. W. Dunscomb.

Mr. St. Gaudens Dies

Augustus St. Gaudens, the distinguished sculptor "than whom," in the words of President Roosevelt "there was no greater artistic genius living in the United States or elsewhere," died at Cornish, N. H., at 7 P. M., on August 3rd, last.

In the Shaw memorial, the Sherman Farragut and other monuments and sculptures, as well as in portrait medallions and plaques, he has left us imperishable marks of his genius.

The new gold \$10 and \$20 pieces which are at present being coined at the Philadelphia mint are of his designing, and have been pronounced beautiful. The obverse type of the \$10 bears a head of Liberty in an Indian headdress, believed to have been posed for by Miss Mary Cunningham of Mr. St. Gaudens's household; the reverse bears a very realistic eagle of the Ptolemaic type. The obverse of the \$20 bears the figure of Liberty standing by a shield with one knee raised. The reverse has an eagle standing with wings open. It is understood that the \$10 piece will be the first upon which the public eye will gaze, although it was generally supposed that the \$20 would be the first to come out.

* * *

ART AND COINS.

To the plain citizen, hustling unprofitably for a meal ticket, all coins look beautiful. As pure works of art they do not appeal much except to the man of safe surplus or meditative disposition. Still, as long as we are going to have art work on our coins, it might as well be artistic.

The government is going to reform the coinage, in recognition of some of its esthetic deficiencies. The purpose is laudable, and would be more so if it reached further. They have decided to make the Indian on the copper cent look like an Indian. Now, if they will go ahead and make the eagle like look an eagle, and the Goddess of Liberty look like a goddess, they will accomplish something worth while.

The Indian that has done duty on the humble penny beyond the beginnings of memory has come to be a sort of established institution, but he must go. He is not an Indian. A false glamour has been lent his Caucasian features by a trumped up headdress, and the copper glow suffusing his classic face has been due to the material of the coin rather than to artistic illusion. So it is better that we should have a real Indian. Poor Lo deserves commemoration on more aristocratic coins, but

even to appear in facsimile on a cent is something. The other reforms announced have to do with the eagle and double eagle. It might be observed that it does not matter much what designs adorn those coins—we see them so infrequently. Nevertheless the proposal to execute some real art on the glad tokens is welcome. The changes to be made are the work of St. Gaudens, and will doubtless be admirable as far as they go.

But the numismatic esthete may well long for more drastic beautification. American coinage has always been distinguished for its ugliness, and not a little for its ineptness. It is easy to pick a quarrel with the great American bird supposed to be portrayed on several of our coins. The conventionalized, heraldic eagle with wings stiffly outspread, sitting on the end of his stub tail in an impossible posture, nibbling an "e pluribus unum" pennant and holding in his extended claws supposititious arrows and olive branch, is somewhat ridiculous. He is hardly suggestive of indomitable soaring propensities.

The smug faced goddess herself courts obliteration. It is hard to see why an American Goddess of Liberty should be Greek anyhow. We have plenty of native goddesses whose faces might more appropriately be limned or engraved. And they would be much more attractive. Not the Gibson girl, of course, or the Stanlaws girl, the Christy girl, Fisher girl, or any other conventional abomination, but a real American girl with the graceful, responsive features that we know. Yet if the face must be Greek, let it be real Greek—not a lifeless and exaggerated imitation of a type. If our silver coins must bear "classic" features, why not borrow the face of Pallas in all its beauty and hauteur and stamp it on a simplified coin, void of foolish fancy work, that also bears a live eagle, flying and victorious?—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

* * *

A Pennsylvania society has protested against the act of the late Augustus Saint-Gaudens in using as the design for the new coin the profile of a young woman born out of the United States. It is interesting to reflect that the model used for long by another artist for his typical "American girl" was also an alien.—N. Y. Sun.

* * *

So that explains the quiet at Oyster Bay. The President is making final arrangements for the improvement of the coinage of the United States.—N. Y. Sun.

ST. GAUDENS' SON VEXED.

Windsor, Vt., Sept. 21.—The St. Gaudens family refuse to give any information whatever regarding Mary Cunningham, the pretty young Irish waitress whom the late Augustus St. Gaudens took as a model when designing the new issue of gold coins.

The Cunningham girl is now employed as a domestic in the family of the late sculptor, but no outsider is allowed to see her. The St. Gaudens villa is secluded on a spur of the Green mountain range with numerous signs at the entrance to the grounds announcing that no strangers are admitted.

Homer St. Gaudens, a son, said tonight that there was some misapprehension regarding the coins on which the young woman's figure is to appear. He said that the statement that her face is to appear in profile on the copper cent is incorrect. He asserted, instead, that she will be shown full length on either the ten or twenty-dollar gold piece. Mr. St. Gaudens was not sure which.

There had been many other models for coins, and he did not see why so much fuss should be made over this one, but at any rate he was not going to add to it by giving any other information.

Young Mr. St. Gaudens, who was vexed, would not discuss the protest of the Independent Order of Americans at the Harrisburg (Penn.) convention against using the Irish-born girl's face on the coins.—Rochester Post Express.

* * *

WANT AMERICAN GIRL ON COINS.

Harrisburg, Pa., Sept. 19.—Victor B. Boyer, State counsellor of the Order of Independent Americans, will personally present to Secretary Cortelyou the protest of the order against placing the profile of Mary Cunningham on the United States gold coins.

Miss Cunningham was a waitress in a Cornish, Vt., eating house when discovered by the late Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the sculptor, who selected her as the model for the design he had been commissioned to execute for the Government.

The Independent Americans, admitting her rare beauty, object because she was born in Ireland.

* * *

Those people who oppose putting the Irish girl's face on the pennies can refuse to take them and be able to prove they have no cents—Brooklyn Union.

The Numismatic Convention and Exhibit

Many of the good people of Columbus, Ohio who were absorbed in the opening of the Ohio State fair and did not know of the national convention of the American Numismatic Association, held in Columbus, and which adjourned on Sept. 5th last, missed the opportunity to view at the Chamber of Commerce the finest and most valuable collection of rare coins, money and masonic insignia and medals ever exhibited in the United States. This splendid array of money was estimated at from \$50,000 to \$100,000 in the common coin of the realm. Mr. H. O. Granberg, who had journeyed from Oshkosh, Wis., had alone an exhibit worth probably \$25,000, which included one of the finest collections of privately struck American gold coins in existence. Several pieces in this collection cost from \$900 to \$1,000 apiece. The Chapman Brothers of Philadelphia, showed a superb assemblage of ancient, mediaeval and modern coins in gold, silver and copper, the lines of Greek and Roman being especially noteworthy for wide variety, rarity of types, historical significance and superb preservation. Mr. A. R. Frey, the president of the Society, exhibited the largest and finest collection of the curiously shaped siege, or necessity, money of the world, struck by beleaguered cities and towns in the 16th and 17th centuries. Notwithstanding the hurried manner in which these unique shaped pieces were engraved and minted, they show in many cases, a delightfully quaint and characteristic art. Most of them were struck in lozenge form. Mr. Howland Wood, of Brookline, Mass., makes oriental coins his study, and his researches have given him a remarkable knowledge of the oriental languages. He has 12,000 coins. His exhibit of the curiously shaped coins, fish hook, hat shaped, fork, ingot, ring and other money was very complete and large. Dr. B. P. Wright, of Schenectady, N. Y., made the finest exhibition of masonic insignia and medals ever shown in this country, and he is regarded as the greatest masonic collector here. Thomas L. Elder's exhibit of modern, foreign and United States coins showed the inferiority of the present coins of the United States as compared with those of Europe.

The following were elected officers of the Numismatic association: President, Farran Zerbe, Tyrone, Pa.; Vice-President, Henrie E. Buck, of Delaware, O.; Secretary, Howland Wood, Brookline, Mass.; Treasurer, Dr. George F. Heath, Monroe, Mich.

The Society appointed a number of committees, including one for the improvement of the coinage of the United States artistically, as follows: Chairman, Thomas L. Elder, New York; Secretary, Samuel

Hudson Chapman, Philadelphia; Dr. Joseph E. Waitt, Boston; Augustus G. Heaton, Washington, D. C.; Theophile E. Leon, Chicago; E. H. Adams, New York.

Mr. Samuel H. Chapman read a valuable and interesting paper entitled, "The portraits of distinguished men of the Roman Republic before the time of the Triumvirs," which he illustrated with twenty coins referred to, a collection well nigh unique. Mr. Zerbe delivered an illustrated address to the public entitled "The origin and uses of money." His large and finely mounted exhibit of all kinds of money interested all visitors to the convention rooms. Mr. A. C. Gies of Pittsburgh exhibited his fine and complete collections of half dollars and large cents of the United States, as well as his rare \$3 gold of 1873 1875 and 1876. Mr. King showed some foreign pieces. Mr. Leon had a large and valuable exhibit of plate money, including the $\frac{3}{4}$ daler. The exhibits were on view free to the public.

The other functions of the convention included a smoker, a public auction sale and banquet. The next convention of the Society will be held in Philadelphia.

Mr. Granberg's Exhibit at Columbus

Private Gold Coins.

	Total Pieces.
\$50 Wass Moliter (4) and Humberts (4)	8
\$20 Kellog & Co., (Mr. Granberg has eight more of these)	8
\$20 Clark, Gruber & Co. 1860	3
\$20 Mormon	2
\$20 Wass Moliter & Co.	1
\$20 U. S. Assay	6
\$16 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ carats, Moffat & Co.	2
\$10 Clark, Gruber & Co.	4
\$10 A. Humbert & Co.	4
\$10 Wass Moliter & Co.	1
\$10 Moffat & Co.	3
\$10 Baldwin	1
\$10 Miner's Bank	1
\$5 Baldwin & Co.	3
\$5 Schultz	1
\$5 Clark & Co., 1861	5

\$5 Mormon, 1860	2
\$5 N. G. & N.	3
\$5 Mormon, 1849	5
\$5 Oregon Exchange Co.	3
\$5 Mormon, 1850	2
\$2.50 J. Parson & Co.	1
\$2.50 J. Parson & Co. (in silver)	1
\$2.50 Templeton Reed, Assayer, Ga. Gold, 1830	2
\$2.50 Mormon	3
\$2.50 Clark & Co.	5
\$2.50 Clark, Gruber & Co.	5

Betchler Gold.

\$5 Georgia Gold	1
\$5 Carolina Gold, 134 G. 21 C.	2
\$5 Carolina Gold 134 G. 21 C.	3
\$5 Carolina 140 Gr. 1834	3
\$2.50 Carolina 64 Grains	3
\$2.50 Carolina 67 Grains	1
\$2.50 C. Bechtler, 20 C. "Assayer"	1
\$1.00 C. Bechtler 28 Grains (1 without stars)	5
\$1.00 C. Bechtler 30 Grains	4
\$1.00 C. Bechtler 27 Grains	8

(N. B. Gold tomatoes, gold dust, nuggets, etc., without premium, from the Hahn's Peak gold mine—face value about \$2,000.)

Convention Jottings

The following gentlemen were guests at dinner at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Henderson: H. E. Buck, Henry Chapman, Farran Zerbe, Dr. Geo. F. Heath and Thomas L. Elder.

Mr. E. H. Adams, the Sun's numismatic sphinx, did not arrive until the second day's session. His glad smile broadened on catching a glimpse of the great array of private gold.

Columbus was shut up tight as a clam on Labor Day. Even the barbers were out, but that did not seaze the fair sprinkling of the be-whiskered.

Mr. King was everywhere, and we vote him the most agile member present.

Alas, the state fair crowded the town, and for most of us it was:
"Two men in a bed and they couldn't agree,
Turn over, turn over."

The poem devoted to the coin gatherers was a good one, thanks to Mr. Hickens.

Let every member who was present send his name and address for the Editor's Convention medal, which, unfortunately did not arrive in time.

If Mr. Henry Chapman had postponed his dissertation on German carp as an edible, Mr. Elder would probably have kept out of bed during the third day. When the Philadelphian compared it to eating a fine-toothed comb the editor threw up the sponge and was counted out.

Mr. Granberg was shadowed; Mr. Leon was plated.

The banquet was a fine one, we hear, but our report on it is brief as at that time the editor was still indulging in "carp dreams."

The highest price ever paid for an ancient or modern coin, \$6,200, was paid for the New York Brasher doubloon at the first of a five days' sale in Philadelphia, June 25, of the coin collection of the late Matthew A. Stickney of Salem, Mass. The nearest approach to this figure ever paid was \$6,100, paid for the unique Bactrian twenty-stater piece of Eukratides by the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris, and \$3,850 given for the Bishop Juxon crown. The bidding for the piece was spirited and it was sold to an anonymous bidder. This piece, of which only six are known, by many regarded as the rarest of all American coins, was struck in New York city in 1787 by Ephraim Brasher, a jeweler, at 350 Pearl street.

The second highest sum was given for the unique "Janus" Massachusetts pattern half penny, supposed to have been the work of Paul Revere. This coin brought \$1,050, the highest price ever paid for an American copper coin.

A rare New York cent brought the third highest figure, \$850, which was paid by DeWitt Smith for the "Liber Natus Libertatem Defendo" copper of 1787. Another New York cent with the State arms on the obverse brought \$210, and another variety of the same kind, showing Liberty and Justice on the reverse, sold for \$460.—Sun.



The American Numismatic Society

Mr. William Poillon the curator states that since May 20th last the following gentlemen have made important donations to the cabinets of the Society: Archer M. Huntington, Victor D. Brenner, William Boerum Wetmore, Julius de Lagerberg, J. N. T. Levick, J. Sanford Saltus, William R. Weeks, W. H. Ellis, W. T. R. Marvin, Butterfield Brothers, Munn & Company, Wm. D. Irvine and Joseph E. Waitt. Mr. Huntington gave a bronze medal of the Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, 1905.

Mr. Wetmore gave several gold, silver and copper coins, Mr. J. Saltus gold insignia, coins and medals, Mr. Weeks a gold decoration, Mr. Waitt several medals. We have not space to list the balance.

The Society's new \$50,000 building is rapidly nearing completion, and will be ready for occupancy at the Fall meetings.

Mr. Archer M. Huntington, the President, has been taking his summer vacation at Newcomb, Essex County, New York.

James W. Ellsworth, of Cleveland, Ohio, a member, has donated \$1,000 to the Society's building fund.

The Society has received several communications from President Roosevelt, in regard to the movement for a more artistic coinage for the United States, and the coinage committee of the Society is still engaged with the matter.

THANKED THE SUN.

New York, Aug. 16, 1907.

New York Sun, City Editor,

My Dear Sir:-

I write on behalf of the above society to express our gratification at the very interesting article which appeared in your paper, on Sunday, August 11th, last, under the heading "The New St. Gaudens

Coins." The interest which you have taken in the matter of improving our coinage will certainly bear fruit. There is no reason why the United States should have coins so far below the artistic standard of other nations, particularly when our paper money, as exemplified by the present Twenty Dollar Gold Certificate, is equalled by few, and excelled by none. The need for improvement is certainly manifest—as any one to look at the half dollar now in use and (covering the hair) decide if the features and neck are those of a man or a woman.

Hoping that you will keep up the good work, I remain,

Yours very truly,

HENRY RUSSELL DROWNE.



The Chicago Numismatic Society

The 44th monthly meeting of the Chicago Numismatic Society was held in their rooms, 1622 Masonic Temple, Friday evening, Sept. 6th, Vice President E. C. Verkler presiding. The following members were present: Mr. Verkler, Mr. Brand, Mr. Excell, Mr. Leon, Mr. Blumenschein, Dr. Merrill, Mr. Chester Dunham, Mr. Sorensen, Mr. Williams and Mr. Green.

Mr. H. T. Folger and Mr. Geo. E. Roberts were elected to membership.

Messrs. Leon and Green having attended the Convention of the American Numismatic Association at Columbus, Ohio, earlier in the week, told of the proceedings of that body.

Exhibits for the evening were not numerous but very interesting, bringing out the usual spirited numismatic discussion.

Books received were *Coins and Medals in the British Museum* by Head; *A list of Confederate Currency* by Massamore; and the *United States Mint Report for 1906*; also a priced catalog of the Stickney Sale.

Adjourned to meet Oct. 4th, 1907.

BEN G. GREEN, Secretary.

FRITZ GOT THE JEWELS RARE

*Near 40 years ago; He treasured them with care; And reasoned thus and so;
They may have graced a queen; They may be wartime pelf—But now
they're mine, I ween—And now he's lost himself.*

The way the story was tipped into the office it glittered with good points, not the least of which was a hint of diamonds and rubies looted by French naval officers from Prussian women flying over seas for safety in the Franco-Prussian war. Of course that point was blunted a bit by the reflection that Prussian refugees were not swamping the steamship booking office in 1870, but there were enough other good points to induce investigation.

The matter of immediate interest is a recent mysterious disappearance; otherwise this is a story of found jewels of great value and possibly romantic history.

Let us begin in the fall of the eventful year 1870 and tell the tale as told by its hero and believed by his friends. Some lads were playing "kick the stick," a game related to sheepfold in the western end of Park place, then called Robinson street, near the waterfront.

One boy, Fritz Wegener, having kicked the stick, skedaddled into a dark hallway, from which he peeked out to observe pursuers. He saw them, not those in his game, but in another, which made his thirteen-year-old heart beat fast. Three officers in French naval uniforms were pursuing the French sailors up the street, off the end of which, as Fritz well knew, lay a French man-o'-war. Fritz ducked. As the sailors ran past one threw into the hallway a bundle, and to dispose of that party now the officers overtook the sailors in City Hall park and marched them back to the ship, which sailed the next day.

Fritz made for the bundle. With it under his arm, through the hallway to the rear yard, over a fence, through other passageways to Greenwich street, thence home at the corner of Murray, and to the garret, for inspection. The bundle was wrapped outside with tarpaulin which covered a sailor's blue uniform shirt, and within were necklaces, earrings, brooches, rings and unset gems enough to make little Fritz gasp.

He hid his treasure among the rafters, where it remained for years, subject to occasional delightful inspections. When the Wegener family moved to 5 Jay street Fritz did a little secret moving, too, and the precious bundle was concealed in the cellar of the new home, where as a recent poet might have remarked, "down from the studded,

undominated firmament, diamonds and red embered rubies sinouldered in the goom" next to the coal bin.

Naturally when he reached the Keats and Dumas age Fritz began to supply a history for his jewels. Had they belonged to some modern Elsie, Marquise de Belliere, who, to raise the long green for suffering France, had unclasped her warmed jewels, one by one, and given them to a naval officer to hock; and the naval officer had seen another light? Had the sailors stolen them, knowing that they had already been stolen or, perhaps, were they from casket rich and amethystine urn, whose dull fires of dusty jewels bound the brows of some fraulein captured by the French warship while, as has been hinted, she, the fraulein, was shaking the fatherland?

Anyway, Fritz Wegener grew up and became as, a side line to his regular business, a dealer in old and rare gems, coins, medals and things. Whether Fritz became such a dealer because Fate had handed him a stock in trade, or Fate knew he was to be such, and stocked him right and early, is a question it only fuzzies the intellect to consider. The point is that, trading in jewels and coins brought him into relations with Thomas L. Elder, a dealer in rare coins and precious stones, at 32 East Twenty-third street. Mr. Elder learned the story of the tarpaulin wrapped treasure and published it, with illustrations of some of the set pieces, in a magazine devoted to such do-dads.

Which brings us to the disappearance. Elder returned from his summer vacation not long ago and wanting to see Wegener on business telephoned to his place of abode, a combination men's lodging house and Turkish bath in 125th street. Wegener, the bath people said, had left hurriedly one morning about July 1 and had not returned. Then the young woman employed by Elder recalled that some one who did not look as if they had an honest interest in precious stones had called for copies of the magazine and later called asking where Wegener might be found. This was not much, but taken in connection with a disappearance from a bath house suggested bodies unpleasantly cut up.

So "The Sun" reporter began a hunt. John C. Huser, a commission merchant of 190 Duane street, is Wegener's brother-in-law. Yes, he knew that Wegener was missing and would be relieved to know where he is, but he was not looking for him. Being a dealer in butter, eggs and cheese Mr. Huser naturally longs for variety, but that longing would not be satisfied by looking for Fritz. No novelty in that. Mr. Huser is a sensible, hearty sort of man, knew the story of the tarpaulin, believed it, and had seen the jewels. He thinks Fritz has not been foully dealt with, because he has "located" him three times since

his sudden disappearance from the bath house.

Once a bath house attendant had seen Fritz in Battery Park, asked him where he was living and Fritz replied "in seclusion." Once Fred Butte, a retired merchant, friend of Huser, saw Fritz on a Jersey Central ferryboat, asked him where he was going and Fritz replied "I'm going to hell." Once a clerk of Husher's saw Fritz on a Jersey City street car, asked him where he was going, but Fritz refused to say. Car was headed toward Paterson; evidence considered corroborative of testimony given by Fritz to Mr. Butte.

Wegener worked twenty-two years for Huser, carrying on his coin and jewelry trade in off hours. Later he worked in the office of a brewery, but did not keep the place because—well, did not the Persian singer ask:

I often wonder what the brewer buys
One half so precious as the stuff he sells.

—N. Y. Sun, Sept. 11, 1907.

Tragic End of Fritz

Rare Gems in Dead Man's Pocket.

Phillipsburg, N. J., Saturday—Near the road leading from Pattenburg to West Portal the body of a man was found today with a bullet wound in the head and a revolver lying beside it. A letter was found in the man's pocket stating that his name was Frederick Edward Wegener, and that he resided in New York.

The letter stated that trouble with his sister-in-law caused him to kill himself. A return ticket to New York was found in one of his pockets, and also a leather case which contained four bottles, one of which was filled with diamonds, rubies and other precious stones. An undertaker at Bloomsbury took charge of the remains.

The letter did not give the name of Wegener's sister-in-law, but said she had libelled him by her utterances at the time of his wife's funeral, nearly two years ago. He asked that John Rife, president of the New York Consumers Brewing Company, at Fifty-fifth street and avenue A, be notified.

It is thought that the body had been lying where it was found since last Sunday. A small sum of money and a few other articles in the man's pockets had not been disturbed.—N. Y. Herald, Sept. 22, 1907.

RECENT COIN AND STAMP SALES.

The sale of the late Rabbi Raphael Benjamin's stamp collection was concluded by Percy G. Doane at 160 Nassau Street, June 29. The total for the sale was \$5,144.96, the Australian and African specimens realizing \$1,524.05, the American \$1,958.05, and the European and Asian \$1,662.91. One of the rarities sold was an unused copy of the 2-cent rose of Hongkong, issue of 1882. It is the first copy that has appeared at auction in America. It fetched \$114. Of the American stamps, a 30-cent unused copy of the issue of 1875 reissue of 1861 brought \$22, and a 90-cent, unused \$14.50; a 30-cent unused, special print 1875, fetched \$27.00, and a 90-cent unused \$21.00. The collection was sold by order of the public administrator. It is understood that Rabbi Benjamin left no near relatives in this country and that the proceeds will go to a brother in London.

* * *

CALIFORNIA MONEY.

Coins in California till the fall of 1856 were a queer kettle of fish. More than 60 per cent of the silver and at least 25 per cent of the gold were foreign.

Most of the other gold coins were private coins. Moffat & Co. got a permit from the government to coin gold. Their coinage was stamped "Moffat & Co." We had all kinds of doubloons and smaller South and Central American coins. Of the smaller gold coins the French twenty franc piece led all the others.

The English guinea was fairly represented. But it passed for only its face value, while the other gold passed for more. The twenty franc piece, value \$3.75, went at \$4.

There was a still greater discrepancy in the silver coins. A one franc piece went for 25 cents, and the East Indian rupee, value 45 cents went for 50 cents; the five franc piece, \$1. The French silver represented about 60 per cent of the silver circulation.

German silver thalers, worth 60 cents, went at \$1. Everything above 50 cents was \$1, and everything above 25 cents was 50 cents. A French bank in San Francisco was said to have got rich shipping French coin in exchange for gold dust. United States coin was scarce until the mint was established. In the fall of 1856 the banks refused to take any foreign coins except at a heavy discount. The result was that in a few months all foreign coin disappeared. It

proved a bonanza for the saloon people. They would still give a drink for a franc, while the banks gave only 12½ cents. The saloon people gathered them and the rupees in at old prices and sold to the banks for bullion and made a good thing.

But for a few years we suffered badly for silver change. Even until 1856 gold dust circulated to a considerable extent in mining districts, but the scales were always used.

There was no paper money until D. O. Mills & Co. issued their gold notes about 1858. In getting change for an old octagon \$50, gold, often as many as four or five nationalities would be represented in the change. On all drafts sent east \$3 was charged by the express companies until Adams & Co. and Page, Bacon & Co. failed and left the field to Wells-Fargo; then it was raised to \$5.

Greenbacks were never recognized as money, only as a commodity. They were used for buying postage and revenue stamps. All mercantile billheads and notes had the special contract enforcement for gold. California even paid the claims of the federal government in gold. And it came in mighty handy to Uncle Sam in 1862 and 1863. The old style Californian still has an inclination for the yellow stuff.—Ex.

* * *

Correspondents of The World who object to an Irish girl's face on the new gold coins find their protest sustained by the Independent Order of Americans, which adopted resolutions against the proposal at Harrisburg recently. Apparently a new and serious issue is in process of development which may complicate the next Presidential campaign. Was the original Columbia of the national coinage native born or did she possess naturalization papers.—New York World.

* * *

The St. Gaudens coin designs are rejected because the figures are too high. Couldn't get the figures on coins too high for some folks.—Ex.

* * *

A NUMISMATIC NOVELTY: THE ONE-ANNA COIN FOR INDIA.

The new one-anna coin for India, which became current on August 1, consists of about three parts of copper to one of nickel. The novel rim with its wavy edge is designed to prevent the coin from rolling.—The Graphic

A special cable despatch to the New York Sun from London says the feature of the first day's sale of the immense coin collection of the late Bruce Cartwright of Honolulu, which took place June 21 at Sotheby's was the tremendous prices paid for the rare Territorial gold pieces struck in California in the early '50s. The highest premium paid was \$1,310 for the \$10 Ormsby gold piece, one of the two known specimens of the variety. American collectors expected record prices but they in no way anticipated such a price as this, and Thomas L. Elder of New York had cabled a bid of \$800, which was thought to be an outside figure, as \$250 had hitherto been considered a fair value for the piece.

The next highest figure was paid for a unique specimen of gold ingot issued by F. D. Kohler in San Francisco in 1850. American collectors were unaware of the existence of this piece until the London catalogue reached them. Heretofore the only known issue of Kohler was the oblong gold piece of the value of \$40.07.

Mr. Elder thought when he cabled a bid of \$900 for this piece that that figure should be well over what the slug would bring, but after a spirited competition the piece was knocked down for \$1,035.

Many other gold pieces of the West were sold, all of which brought high prices. Among these were the rare circular fifty-dollar piece of Wass, Molitor & Co., dated 1855; an octagonal quintuple eagle of Augustus Humbert, dated 1852; \$2.50 and \$10 of the Mormon gold coinage of Utah, two ten-dollar pieces of "Pike's Peak Gold" of Clark, Gruber & Co., of Denver, dated 1860 and 1861, and two other California eagles of 1849 and 1855 of Wass, Molitor & Co. and Moffat & Co.

* * *

OUR NATIONAL COIN COLLECTION.

Visitors making the round of Philadelphia's attractions find much to interest in the United States Mint, and, among other things, the coin collection which has been accumulating there, lo, these many years is given marked attention. The coins of a country are monuments of its history. Much of our knowledge of half-forgotten nations is derived from the specimens of coin accidentally coming down to our times. The collection at the Mint is of incalculable historic importance, and to those unacquainted with the subject the varied interests it represents afford surprises at once pleasing and instructive. To artists and experts these examples of the medalist's work are of especial

value as illustrating the progress of art in our own and in former ages.

It is little to the credit of our Government that this admirable collection owes its existence almost exclusively to private initiative and personal generosity. The officials of the Mint have done much to promote the formation of a numismatic library and the bringing together and preservation of metal money specimens, but they have labored in this behalf without compensation or credit, often giving of their own means to help the collection. The Government owns the property, but is not officially aware of the fact, giving no countenance or recognition thereto. The United States Treasury should be ashamed to permit such a discreditable state of affairs to continue. The estimates of the department for regular appropriations should include a sum large enough to provide for the care and safekeeping of the collection and also provide a fund for the acquisition of coins and medals of historic value as opportunity offers. No other nation possessing a mint is so unmindful of this matter as our own, and it is high time the neglect should be remedied.—Register, Mt. Gilead, Ohio.

* * *

RARE \$100 BILL TURNS UP.

While the new \$100 gold certificates have given the receiving tellers of the city banks much annoyance recently thru the ease with which they may be mistaken for the gold notes of \$20 denomination, a far more troublesome visitor in the shape of a crisp \$100 bill of curious design wandered into one of the downtown banks the other day.

The unfamiliar bill was of yellow paper, the printing on the front was black, while the principal device was that of an eagle above the United States shield and the stars and stripes. But the most curious part of the bill was the back, which, in complete contrast to the yellow, green and brown backs of the current notes, was red in color, and the words "One Hundred Dollars," in very large letters, extended from one end to the other.

The receiving teller had never seen a United States bill of this kind, and was especially puzzled by the red back. He called to his assistance employees of the bank of thirty years' experience, but they were equally at sea regarding the bill's identity.

So it was sent to the subtreasury, and word soon came back that the bill was "just as good as gold," being of the first series of gold certificates issued by the United States. It apparently had lain between the leaves of a book, where no doubt it had rested since 1865, the year of its issue, at which time there was a very high premium on

gold, and at the time the bill had been put away it was worth \$160 in any other kind of money.

This series was issued for banking and clearing house purposes, and a specimen seldom got into circulation. At the time of its appearance deposits of gold were made with the government, for which the certificates were issued, these greatly facilitating gold transfers.—Minneapolis Journal.

* * *

Numismatists are now on the lookout for some Roumanian coins of the face value of one franc, which are worth from 150 to 180 francs apiece. They are some of the coins which were struck last year in commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the accession of King Carol to the throne of Roumania, and, as may be guessed, they contain a strange error. In 1866 King Carol was only Domn, or Prince of Roumania, and one side of the coin shows the King as a young man with the inscription, "Domn of Roumania, 1866," while on the other side is the portrait of the King as he now is with the words, "King of Roumania, 1906." But by some extraordinary blunder the inscriptions got reversed, and the portrait of the King as he now is bears the words, "Domn of Roumania, 1866." The coins were called in as soon as possible, but about 150 of them got into circulation, and it is these coins which are now being sought after by collectors.—London P. T. C.

* * *

SILVER CENTER CENTS.

A curious cent, dated 1792, which has come into the hands of Thomas L. Elder, a coin dealer, is said to represent the first attempt to strike a coin of this denomination at the United States mint at Philadelphia.

On the obverse is a rather ugly head of Liberty to the right, with hair flowing behind, and below, in small figures, is the date "1792." Around the border is inscribed "Liberty Parent of Science & Indus." On the reverse is a wreath, enclosing the words "One Cent," with "1-100" below, and surrounding the whole central device is the inscription "United States of America."

The piece is much smaller than the ordinary Colonial cent, being about the size of the half cent struck in the year following. It is composed of copper, but before placing the blank in the coinage press a small plug of silver had been inserted in the middle, and the rarity now is known to coin collectors as the "Silver Center Cent." It is said

the intention in putting in this plug of silver was to bring up the intrinsic value of the coin to exactly one cent.

It is thought that the cent was the design of a blacksmith named Peter Getz of Lancaster, Pa., a self-taught engraver, who was employed at the mint when that institution first began operations in 1792, and who cut the dies for several other varieties of the early coins. The same design was struck in plain copper, but without the silver plug, and this variety, too, is very rare.

The inscription on the obverse of the silver center cent is the same as that borne by the interesting "disme" and "half disme," also struck at the mint in the same year from Washington's private plate, the head of Liberty on the two latter coins being posed for by Martha Washington, it is popularly supposed. The latter coins also are rare, but do not compare in scarcity with the silver center cent, of which only five are known to be in existence.

While regularly struck and issued by the United States mint engravers, still the silver center cent was for some reasons rejected by the authorities and so never got into general circulation.

This particular specimen had been in the possession of a small country merchant for forty years, and he was overwhelmed with surprise to learn that the coin was regarded as one of the rarest of the United States coins.—Rochester Herald.

* * *

Unless Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Sr., can convince Secretary Cortelyou of the Treasury, that a clerical error occurred in the invoicing of portraits of herself and her daughter, Miss Gladys Vanderbilt, the two paintings, together with other expensive etchings, will be sold by the Government under the seizure provisions of the customs administration law.

That a serious mistake was made in the entry values appears from the official figures. The portrait of Mrs. Vanderbilt, for example, was entered as possessing a value of only 650f., whereas Appraiser Fowler decided that the painting was worth 4,500f. The painting depicting Miss Vanderbilt was also invoiced at a low figure—600f.—and was raised by the Appraiser to 5,500f. Judge Waite reduces the local appraisers return by 500f., making the value of the work 5,000f.

It seemed to be the general opinion among customs officials that an exception will be taken in Mrs. Vanderbilt's case, as the authorities hold to the belief that her unfortunate predicament is due entirely to misconception.—Art News.

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